



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

between the first and second acts. With consummate art Shakespeare makes us see that the action is important, concerning not simply individuals but kings and empires, and that this interval of time was employed by Brutus in a most exciting inward conflict :

“ Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma or a hideous dream :
The genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council, and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.”

Now, this ‘first motion’ is an exact definition of the exciting force, which is expressed in Brutus’ words at the beginning of Act II, “Then it must be by his death,” the completion of the hero’s resolve to join and lead the conspiracy against the life of Caesar. Usually this conflict, whether inward or outward, is seen in the introduction, the interval between Acts I and II being devoted to preparation for the carrying out of the resolve which forms the exciting or initiating force of the action ; but in the case of *Julius Caesar* the actual resolution of Brutus is delayed until after this “interim” between the “first motion” and “the acting of a dreadful thing.”

In a Classical drama or a drama with only one action, there is, of course, only one exciting force and its position is regular, being at or near the end of Act I. In romantic dramas, however, there are often several actions—a main action and one or more minor or subordinate actions. Each of these actions has its own exciting force ; but sometimes, as in *Hernani* and *The Robbers*, the exciting force of a sub-action usurps the position usually held by that of the main action, intentionally perhaps misleading the spectators.

JAMES D. BRUNER.

The University of North Carolina.

A MISINTERPRETED PASSAGE IN GOETHE’S *HERMANN UND DOROTHEA*.

In order to realize the state of affairs presented in the concluding canto of *Hermann und Dorothea*, it should be remembered that when the maiden is

introduced into Hermann’s parental home, all persons are aware of the young man’s real intentions, except Dorothea herself. Thus the father, going straight to the point with his whimsical, self-complacent speech (IX, 78–85) unwittingly brings the uncomfortable situation to a head. Encouraged by the sagacious pastor, Hermann relieves the tension of the moment by confessing his stratagem and declaring his love to Dorothea ; and then the pastor, with his accustomed presence of mind and sureness of judgment, seizes upon the “psychologic” moment and of his own accord proceeds to the rites of betrothal, as follows (243 f.) :

“ Noch einmal sei der goldenen Reifen Bestimmung,
Fest ein Band zu knüpfen, das völlig gleiche dem alten.
Dieser Jüngling ist tief von der Liebe zum Mädchen
durchdrungen,
Und das Mädchen gesteht, dass auch ihr der Jüngling
erwünscht ist.
Also verlob’ ich euch hier und segn’ euch künftigen
Zeiten,
Mit dem Willen der Eltern und mit dem Zeugnis des
Freundes.”

The mercurial apothecary cannot refrain from signalling his felicitations before the ceremony is over (249 f.) :

“ Und es neigte sich gleich mit Segenswünschen der
Nachbar.
Aber als der geistliche Herr den goldenen Reif nun
Steckt’ an die Hand des Mädchens, erblickt’ er den
anderen
staunend,
Den schon Hermann zuvor am Brunnen sorglich be-
trachtet.
Und er sagte darauf mit freundlich scherzenden Worten :
‘ Wie ! du verlobest dich schon zum zweitenmal ? Dass
nicht der erste
Bräutigam bei dem Altar sich zeige mit hinderndem
Einspruch ! ’ ”

Probably the passage would not bother the reader had it not been obfuscated by critical overconscientiousness. For the editors, from Father Düntzer on, are perplexed by the pastor’s astonishment, inasmuch as he knows, or ought to know, all about Dorothea’s former love affair (VI, 186–190). And so they seek for an explanation. Nearly all American editors of *H. u. D.* have dealt with this question.

Says Hewett (p. 209) : “The pastor’s real or feigned surprise has led to the supposition that

the lines in canto VI, 186–190, were an interpolation," etc.; . . . *id.* (p. 210), anent l. 255: "This reference to Dorothea's first betrothed would have been cruel had the pastor known the verses VI, 187–191, describing the noble death of her lover, and her silent heroism under her loss."

Hatfield (p. 168), acquiescing, adds the remark that "such inconsistencies are not unknown in Goethe's works, notably in 'Faust.'"

Allen (p. 181) suggests as a motive for the pastor's feigned surprise a desire to elicit from Dorothea herself a recital of her story.

Thomas (p. 104) mentions the interesting fact that the pastor has once been on the point of telling Hermann of Dorothea's first engagement (VI, 251), and hazards two guesses, neither of them very plausible: . . . "to disclose his knowledge now, in Dorothea's presence, would bring out the story of his playing the spy upon her. He has also a pardonable desire to hear the story from the girl herself."

It strikes me as strange that none of the editors express any concern over what would be really far more disturbing to the æsthetic enjoyment of our poem than that inferential lapse of memory, real or feigned, on the part of the pastor; namely, the calamitous break in the delineation of his character by the poet. The taunting query:

"Wie! du verlobest dich schon zum zweitenmal?"

and the facetious threat:

"Dass nicht der erste
Bräutigam bei dem Altar sich zeige mit hinderndem
Einspruch!"

so unsuited to the solemn moment—would they not be wholly out of keeping with the spiritual and social grace of the pastor whom we know to be a man of the world (I, 80, 83; VI, 306, f.), and who has only just been commended again (IX, 239) as *gut* and *verständlich*, at the very opening of our passage? Yet there is no doubt that this *mauvaise plaisanterie* is laid at the door of the kindest and most sensible of ministers *nemine contradicente*.

It is slightly mortifying to have to confess that my own present understanding of the passage is due to the suggestion of a student at Washington University, —a Freshman, to make the humiliation

complete!¹ — namely, that the pronoun *er* (251) might refer, not to *der geistliche Herr* (253), but to *der Nachbar* (249).

It will readily be admitted that those illtimed remarks are quite within the possibilities of our none too discreet friend of the mortar and pestle, while at the same time his surprise would not be quite so inconsistent with the antecedents. At the close of v (241 ff.) the apothecary was seen to leave the pastor and the judge to themselves; his excited curiosity deflected his interest from the judge's story. It is true, as Professor Collitz has clearly pointed out to me, that an unbiased reading of the sequel (VI) shows no evidence of inattention on the part of the apothecary when reference is made to Dorothea's first betrothal (186 f.). Yet absentmindedness there must have been. The question is: Whose mind was it that wandered? The pastor's? The druggist's? Or Goethe's? I contend that the presumption is against the apothecary, so that there is at least some probability of his being genuinely astonished at the sight of the old engagement ring.

Grammatically, to be sure, the proposed reference of *er* to *der Nachbar* seems at first rather dubious.

Not that the rulings of the grammarians stand in the way of the construction here advocated. The most that is to be gathered from their statutes is that the personal pronoun refers to a preceding noun of the same gender and number and that if ambiguity would follow the use of *er*, certain pronouns of demonstrative force should be substituted. Indeed the rule as formulated by Curme would hardly permit of any construction except the one suggested by Miss Harris. For Curme has it (§ 141, 7) that "*er* refers to the subject of the preceding sentence, or in a complex sentence to the subject of the main clause, while *derselbe* (or *dieser*) refers to some oblique case in the preceding sentence or in a complex sentence to some word in a preceding subordinate clause," etc. In our case, therefore, *er* in 253 would refer to *er* in 251 (as it must under any circumstances), and the first *er* could have for its antecedent not *der geistliche Herr*, this not being the subject of the main clause, but only *der Nachbar*, which is

¹ Miss Celia Harris, of St. Louis, Mo.

the subject of the preceding sentence. We must refrain, however, from making capital out of the above not altogether correct summary of actual literary practice, the more so since Curme himself practically repudiates the rule by advising, very justly, adherence to the personal pronoun (in preference over *derselbe* and *dieser*), if no ambiguity would arise therefrom. Heyse, 24th edition, p. 147, says that *in doubtful cases* reference to the subject of the previous clause should be made by means of *er*, but to the object by means of *derselbe*. The aversion to *derselbe* in such use, nay in conversational German its absolute avoidance, is not taken into account. In Curme, by the way, I find no allusion to the use of *jener* for *er* to refer back to a word in a preceding sentence or clause by which means a very careful writer may nearly always obviate ambiguity; e. g., "Aus allen Bänden ragten zahlreiche Papierstreifen und bewiesen, dass jene fleissig gelesen wurden." Gottfr. Keller, *Das Sinngedicht*, Ges. Werke, VII, p. 40.

In contrast with such almost overscrupulous avoidance of ambiguity stands the slipshod use of the personal pronoun which may be frequently observed in writers of a more ordinary stamp:

"Ihr Fuss berührte seinen Schenkel; er spürte es; es war, als ob ein Feuer von ihm (Fuss? Schenkel? er?) auslief." C. Freiherr v. Schlichtegroll, *Die Hexe von Klewan*, p. 78.

But ambiguity occurs also in writers who are in general quite careful in matters of style:

"Er (Jörn Uhl) warf den Rock ab und zog sein Hemd aus und fasste den Oberkörper des Verwundeten. Da stiess *er* einen Schrei aus; sein Kopf fiel zurück, und *er* war tot." (Not Jörn, but the wounded soldier, was dead.) G. Frenssen, *Jörn Uhl*, p. 272.

For the correct reference of the personal pronoun the writer unconsciously relies on the context; as a rule he may do so with far greater safety than on any grammatical prescript. The next illustration is from an author with an exceptionally good diction:

"Sie (Iphigenie) gedenkt seiner (des Tantalus) mit Ehrfurcht, auch Orest nennt ihn das teure, vielverehrte Haupt. Von einer Liebe zu den

Seinigen ist eigentlich nur bei ihm (i. e. bei Tantalus) die Rede." Kuno Fischer, *Goethe's Iphigenie*, p. 30.

It will be noticed that in the last example the personal pronoun does not relate "to the subject of the preceding sentence" any more than in the sentence from *Jörn Uhl*.

Observance of the "rule," in itself, by no means furnishes a safeguard against momentary equivocation. In the following, the noun subject of the first sentence would better have been repeated in the subordinate clause of the second:

"Das Kopftuch trug sie, wie sich's für ein ehrbares und unbescholtenes Mädchen gehört; doch ahnte man den dicken Knopf braunen Haares darunter, obwohl *es* (das Kopftuch) das ganze Gesicht rahmte und hüllte." J. J. David, *Filippinas Kind*, Neue Rundschau, Jan., 1907, p. 96.

In ordinary conversation, too, the clarity of expression does not depend on compliance with the "rule." If I were told in a tone of perfect calmness: "Ich trat ins Zimmer meines Sohnes, um nach dem Ofen zu sehen und bemerkte zu Ümeiner berraschung, dass er rauchte," I might be in doubt whether the surprise was due to the smoking of the stove or of the speaker's son.

A considerable collection of sentences with a more or less uncertain reference of the personal pronoun, culled casually from my miscellaneous reading in the course of a few weeks, furnishes convincing proof that the passage in *Hermann und Dorothea* in point of syntax has analogues by the score; yet our passage may be reckoned as unique in that the true antecedent of the personal pronoun has apparently not even been given the "benefit of the doubt."

In English the personal pronoun pays even less attention to the wishes of grammarians. This is due to the more restricted possibilities of substitution. The lack of surrogates is not infrequently responsible for actual ambiguity where enlightenment is not conveyed by circumstantial evidence. A double meaning would be carried by a warning worded as follows:

You must not put your hands on the pictures, else *they* will be soiled.

A few other cases of syntactical unclearness of the sort :

"It was a long time since Babington's course of life had fostered physical courage. As a college boy, etc. It was Plow that stood in all the glory of his healthy and mature manhood, ready and unafraid. *His* (Babington's) heart beat at his ribs as if it would burst, and his hands were helpless." Herbert M. Hopkins, *The Torch*, p. 349 f.

"By this time I had enough of these credulous inanities, and so I left *them* (refers to the Apostles Peter and John) to their foolish selves." Will. Schuyler, *Under Pontius Pilate*, p. 25.

In the next example, the reader's doubt is not resolved till the last word is reached :

"Morell, angered, turns suddenly on him (Marchbank). *He* flies to the door in involuntary dread." G. Bernard Shaw, *Candida* : Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant, vol. II, p. 235.

The following passage from a writer favorably known for his clear and trenchant style is of special interest in that the personal pronoun is even more remote from its antecedent noun than in our passage in *Hermann und Dorothea* :

"At heart Fiesco is never a republican, though he sometimes takes his mouth full of republican phrases. His mainspring of action is not the welfare of Genova, but his own aggrandizement. Old Andrea, whose power he plots to overthrow and whose magnanimity puts him to shame, is actually a better man than he. If *he* (Fiesco, of course) has a measure of our sympathy in his feud with the younger Doria, that is only because Gianettino is portrayed as a vulgar brute, etc." Calvin Thomas, *Life of Schiller*, p. 86.

It has already been noticed that the possessive pronoun is just as apt to lead to misunderstanding as the personal :

"Gemmingen's 'Head of the House' is an upright German nobleman, etc. . . . His eldest son, Karl, has fallen madly in love with Lotte Wehrmann, etc. . . . The younger son, Ferdinand, an officer, has taken to gaming, lost heavily and has a duel on his hands. His (namely, the upright gentleman's) son-in-law, Monheim, has

become infatuated with a dazzling widow, etc., . . ." *Ibid.*, p. 120.

For the careful reader there is no real ambiguity here, since preceding sentences prepare him to refer *his* to "head of the house."

My final illustrations, however, shall be still more to the purpose. Next to Goethe himself, the weightiest witness to be cited in support of Miss Harris's contention that the maladroitness remarks are interposed by the apothecary, not the minister, is undeniably Schiller. We may content ourselves with a single striking passage from his poetry :

"Aufs Weidwerk hinaus ritt ein edler Held,
Den flüchtigen Gamsbock zu jagen.
Ihm folgte der Knapp mit dem Jägersgeschoss,
Und als *er* auf seinem stattlichen Ross
In eine Au kommt geritten,
Ein Glücklein hört er erklingen fern ;
Ein Priester war's mit dem Leib des Herrn ;
Vorankam der Messner geschritten."

Schiller, *der Graf von Habsburg*.

Here the immediate context is no more enlightening as regards the relation of *er* than in the lines under discussion ; and I fail to see why in the last analysis a narrow interpretation of a more or less fictitious rule is less absurd in *Hermann und Dorothea* than it would be in Schiller's ballad, had it ever occurred to anybody to propose it for the latter. Best proof of all, repetitions of the sin against that "rule" are not lacking in Goethe's own writings. Take this one which is not without special aggravations :

"Nach Aulis lockt er sie (viz. Klytämnestra) und brachte dort,

Als eine Gottheit sich der Griechen Fahrt
Mit ungestümen Winden widersetzte,
Die ält'ste Tochter, Iphigenien,
Vor den Altar Dianens, und *sie* fiel
Ein blutig Opfer für der Griechen Heil.
Dies, sagt man, hat *ihr* einen Widerwillen
So tief ins Herz geprägt, dass sie dem Werben
Ägisthens sich ergab und den Gemahl
Mit Netzen des Verderbens selbst umschlang."

Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, III, 1 (l. 908 ff.).

Attention should also be called to the typographic divisions of canto IX of *Hermann und Dorothea*. I feel that according to the current understanding, l. 249 would better conclude the preceding section. Placed at the beginning of a new paragraph, *Aber* would certainly have less

adversative force. As it is, to make *aber* fit in with the sense imagined by the editors it would have to be taken not as the real German conjunction but as a mere connective in imitation of Greek μέν, δέ; whereas properly read, *aber* here marks very skilfully the sudden check of the apothecary's blithe alacrity.

I doubt not that a closer scrutiny of the text on the basis of the above material will cause many to accept Miss Harris's suggestion, and that with the poet's acquittal of having marred the character presentment of the pastor, the enjoyment of the poem as an artistic whole will be still further enhanced.

OTTO HELLER.

Prague, Bibliotheca Caesarea Regia.

ESPRONCEDA, BYRON AND OSSIAN.

In the course of a study of the relations between Lord Byron's poetry and that of José de Espronceda, I noticed the remarkable resemblance of the Spaniard's hymn *Al Sol*¹ to Byron's versification of Ossian's Address to the Sun in "Carthon."² In both compositions the question is raised whether the sun will perish like mankind, or live on unextinguished, immortal; and the parallelism here suggested is established beyond a cavil by such practically identical lines as the following:—

"Exult, O Sun, in all thy youthful strength!
Age, dark unlovely Age, appears at length."
(ll. 29-30.)

"Goza tu juventud y tu hermosura,
¡ Oh sol ! que cuando el pavoroso día
Llegue que el orbe estalle y se desprendá
De la potente mano
Del Padre soberano," (ll. 93-97.)

Before long I hope to show in detail how greatly Espronceda was influenced by Lord Byron, but the above interesting parallelism cannot be used to strengthen the case; for the Spanish poet died in 1842, and the lines in English quoted above

were first published in 1898. To be sure, Byron made another version of the same theme, but that, too, was not published until the same year.³ As it is clear, then, that a Byronic source for the *hymno* is out of the question, one turns instinctively to Ossian itself. In this connection, before considering Espronceda's poem on the sun, it may be well first to note that he wrote two confessed imitations "*del estilo de Ossian*." These are grouped together under the joint title of *Oscar y Malvina*,⁴ and are preceded by the Ossianic legend "A tale of the times of old." The separate poems are called *La Despedida* and *El Combate*. While I have not made a minute study of Espronceda's possible relations to the Ossian matter in general, yet it is safe to say that in both of these compositions he has caught the weird, mournful, mysterious spirit of the "bard"; and there is, moreover, considerable imitation of proper names and incidents, beside such tricks as the use of compound epithets,—*armipotente, aurirrolladas*,⁵—and others like "*Oscar de negros ojos*."⁶ But there is also much original material in Espronceda's poems, particularly in the *Despedida*, which has little in common with the Ossianic matter except the use of such names as those of the lovers, Oscar and Malvina. *El Combate* has borrowed more freely,—from the Ossianic fight between Oscar and Cairbar⁷ ("Cairvar" in the Spanish poem); for not only do the two champions die of mutually inflicted wounds in both compositions, but the *défi*, in both, indicates borrowing:—

"Do I fear thy clanging shield?
Tremble I at Olla's song? No: Cairbar, fright-
en the feeble: Oscar is a rock." (p. 227, ll. 5-7.)

"Levántate, Cairvar—Oscar le grita—
Cual hórrida tormenta
Eres tú de temer: mas yo no tiemblo:
Desprecio tu arrogancia vosadía:
La lanza apresta y el escudo embraza:
Álzate, pues, que Oscar te desafia." (ll. 8-13.)

³ Cf. *Atlantic Monthly*, 1898, vol. LXXXII, pp. 810-814; also *The Works*, &c.; *Poetry*, vol. VII (1904), p. 2.

⁴ *Obras*, pp. 50-54.

⁵ *El Combate*, ll. 22 and 24.

⁶ *La Despedida*, l. 49.

⁷ *The Poems of Ossian, Centenary Edition*, Edinburgh, 1896, pp. 225-229.

¹ *Obras poéticas de Espronceda*, Valladolid, 1900, p. 55.

² *The Works of Lord Byron*. London. *Poetry*, vol. I (1898), p. 229.